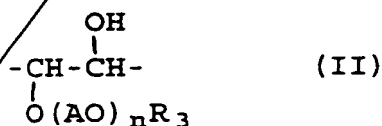


C L A I M S

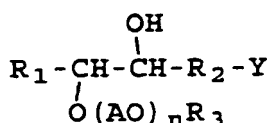
1. Nonionic compounds characterised by the general formula RY (I), where R is a substituted aliphatic group containing 1-3 structure elements with the formula



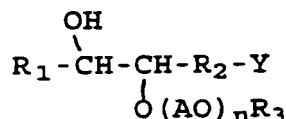
where the carbon atoms shown in the structure element are part of the aliphatic carbon skeleton of group R, which contains 8-24 carbon atoms, and Y is a nitrile or an amide group; R₃ is an alkyl group with 1-4 carbon atoms; AO is an alkyleneoxy group containing 2-4 carbon atoms and n is a number between 1 and 30.

2. Nonionic compounds according to claim 1 containing 1-2 structure elements according to formula (II).

3. Nonionic compounds characterised by the general formulae



or



(IIIa)

(IIIb)

where R₁ is an aliphatic group, R₂ is an aliphatic radical, the sum of carbon atoms contained in R₁ and R₂ is between 9 and 19; and R₃, AO, n and Y have the same meaning as in claim 1.

4. Nonionic compounds according to claims 1-3 where at least 50% of the AO groups are ethyleneoxy groups.

5. Nonionic compounds according to claims 1-3 where the AO group is the ethyleneoxy group.

6. Nonionic compounds according to claims 1-3 where n is 3-20 and R₃ is methyl or ethyl.

7. A method of producing a nonionic compound according to claims 1-6, characterised in that the compound is produced by

a) reacting an epoxidised nitrile containing 1-3 epoxy groups and a total of 8 to 24 carbon atoms with an alkyl blocked polyalkylene glycol having the formula $R_3O(AO)_nH$, where R_3 , AO and n has the same meaning as in claims 1-6, in the presence of a catalyst, and optionally subjecting the product obtained to alkaline hydrogen peroxide or

b) reacting ammonia or a primary or secondary amine with an acid or an ester containing 1-3 structure elements according to formula II as defined in claims 1-6.

8. Use of the compound according to claims 1-6 as a surfactant in a cleaning process.

9. Use of the surfactant according to claim 8 for the cleaning of hard surfaces.

10. Use of the surfactant according to claim 8 in a vehicle cleaning process, for bottle cleaning, machine dishwashing or machine washing of textiles.

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present, and

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